Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-25 without prejudice, and add new claims 26-51, as follows: .

Claims 1-25 (cancelled).

Claim 26 (new).   Apparatus for providing optical radiation, comprising an optical fibre having core, a first cladding and a second cladding, and wherein the first cladding has a substantially constant diameter in its cross-section.

Claim 27 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the first cladding is non-circular.

Claim 28 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the first cladding has at least one axis of mirror symmetry.

Claim 29 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the first cladding has a geometric centre.

Claim 30 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 29 in which the core is located at the geometric centre.

Claim 31 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 29 in which the core is offset from the geometric centre.

Claim 32 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the core is centred at the centre of a smallest imaginary circle that can contain the first cladding.

Claim 33 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the core is offset from the centre of a largest imaginary circle that can be contained within the first cladding.

Claim 34 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the first cladding is defined by circular arcs having centres at vertices of an equilateral star.

Claim 35 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 34 wherein the circular arcs each have a first radius equal to a length of a side of the star.

Claim 36 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 34 wherein the circular arcs each have a first radius greater than a length of a side of the star, the circular arcs are joined by second circular arcs having a centre located at the vertices, and circular arcs each have a second radius equal to the difference between the first radius and the length of the side of the star.

Claim 37 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 34 wherein the star is defined by lines, and each line of the star crosses all the other lines of the star.

Claim 38 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 37 wherein the star is an equiangular star.

Claim 39 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 37 wherein the star contains at least two different angles.

Claim 40 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 34 wherein the star contains an odd number of vertices.

Claim 41 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the fibre contains at least one longitudinally extended hole.

Claim 42 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 41 wherein the hole is circular.

Claim 43 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 41 wherein the hole is non-circular.

Claim 44 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the fibre contains at least one region of low refractive index.

Claim 45 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 44 wherein the region of low refractive index is circular.

Claim 46 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 44 wherein the region of low refractive index is non-circular.

Claim 47 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the fibre comprises rare-earth dopant.

Claim 49 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 47 wherein the rare earth doping is selected from the group consisting of Ytterbium, Erbium, Neodymium, Praseodymium, Thulium, Samarium, Holmium and Dysprosium, Erbium codoped with Ytterbium, or Neodymium codoped with Ytterbium.

Claim 50 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 and further comprising a pump source configured to provide pump radiation coupled to the first cladding.

Claim 51 (new).   Apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the apparatus is in the form of a laser, an amplifier, a source of amplified spontaneous emission, or a master oscillator power amplifier.

(End of amendments.)